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Metro's Weather Report

NOAA-NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
44° | 45°	55° | 46°	63° | 51°	66° | 53°	66° | 53°
Rain	Chance showers	Partly sunny	Chance showers	Mostly sunny

Iran commander calls US military in Gulf a target not a threat: ISNA

U.S. forces have been sent to the Middle East to counter "clear indications" of threats.

REUTERS

A senior Iranian Revolutionary Guards commander said on Sunday the U.S. military presence in the Gulf used to be a serious threat but now represented a target, the Iranian Students' News Agency (ISNA) reported.

The U.S. military has sent forces, including an aircraft carrier and B-52 bombers, to the Middle East in a move U.S. officials said was to counter "clear indications" of threats from Iran to its forces in the region.

The U.S.S. Abraham Lincoln is replacing another carrier rotated out of the Gulf last month.

"An aircraft carrier that has at least 40 to 50 planes on it and 6,000 forces gathered within it was a serious threat for us in the past but now it is a target and the threats have switched to opportunities," said Amirali Hajizadeh, head of the Guards' aerospace division.

"If [the Americans] make a move, we will hit them in the head," he added, according to ISNA.

Iranian navy commander Rear Admiral Hossein Khanzadi said on Sunday that American forces must exit, according to ISNA. "The presence of the Americans in the Persian Gulf region has reached its end and they must leave the region," Khanzadi said.

Major General Hossein Salami, appointed head of the Guards last month, told parliament on Sunday the United States had started a psychological war in the region, the parliamentary spokesman said.

"Commander Salami, with attention to the situation in the region, presented an analysis that the Americans have started a psychological war because the comings and goings of their military is a normal matter," spokesman Behrouz Nemati said, according to parliament's ICANA news site.

> **"An aircraft carrier that has at least 40 to 50 planes on it and 6,000 forces gathered within it was a serious threat for us in the past but now it is a target and the threats have switched to opportunities."**
>
> **Amirali Hajizadeh, head of the Revolutionary Guards' aerospace division**

Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said in a tweet on Sunday that John Bolton had planned the U.S. withdrawal from a 2015 nuclear deal and a more aggressive approach even before the U.S. national security adviser took up his post.

Zarif tweeted a link to a 2017 National Review article by Bolton headlined "How to Get Out of the Iran Nuclear Deal."

"A detailed blueprint for #FakeIntelligence, #ForeverWar and even empty offers for talks-only phone numbers were not included," Zarif wrote.

CNN reported on Friday that the White House had passed a telephone number to the Swiss for contacting U.S. President Donald Trump in case Iranian officials wanted to hold talks.

The Swiss embassy in Tehran represents U.S. interests in the Islamic Republic. REUTERS

2 Pilot lands plane on nose after landing gear failure

A Myanmar pilot safely landed a passenger jet without its front wheels on Sunday, after landing gear on the Myanmar National Airlines plane failed to deploy, the airline and an official said. It was the second aviation incident in Myanmar this week, after a Biman Bangladesh Airlines plane skidded off the runway during strong wind in Yangon on Wednesday, injuring at least 17 of those onboard. An official praised the pilot for bringing the Embraer 190 aircraft in to land at Mandalay airport on Sunday morning despite the technical failure. No one was hurt. Myanmar National Airlines, the state-run carrier, said in a statement the aircraft had departed from the city of Yangon and was approaching the airport serving the central city of Mandalay when the pilot was unable to extend the front landing gear. REUTERS

3 Conn. man faces 140 years in prison for Trump threat

A Connecticut man has been indicted after prosecutors say he threatened to kill President Donald Trump and sent others bomb threats and mail containing suspicious white powder, according to court documents. Gary Gravelle, 51, was indicted on 16 counts, including that he threatened the president in September 2018 by sending an envelope containing white powder and the handwritten message "You Die." He sent similar envelopes to a synagogue, a mosque and a chapter of the NAACP, according to the indictment. The note claimed the powder was a biotoxin but it was found to be harmless, officials said. Gravelle also sent emails and made phone calls threatening to detonate bombs in Vermont, Washington and at various locations in Connecticut, including government buildings and a mental health facility. REUTERS

4 Gunmen kill 6 in 2nd church attack in Burkina Faso

Gunmen killed six people including a priest outside a Catholic church in Burkina Faso on Sunday, the government said, the second attack on Christians in two weeks in a nation increasingly overrun by jihadists. Congregants were leaving church around 9 a.m. in the town of Dablo in the Central North region when about 20 men encircled them and shot six dead, according to a government statement and local sources. The attackers then burned the church, looted a pharmacy and some others stores, and left, Dablo Mayor Boucary Zongo told Reuters. The government statement only mentioned the burning of a shop and two vehicles. "These terrorist groups are now attacking religion with the macabre aim of dividing us," it said. The government declared a state of emergency in several northern provinces bordering Mali in December because of deadly Islamist attacks. REUTERS

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Cuomo calls excessive MTA overtime 'theft and fraud'

The governor said an independent investigator should look into the transit agency's overtime procedures.

MICHAEL MARTIN
letters@metro.us

GETTY IMAGES

Gov. Andrew Cuomo had harsh words on Sunday for MTA employees accused of padding their paychecks with excessive overtime, calling it "stealing" and "fraud."

The New York Post reported last month that some employees of the Long Island Rail Road claimed they worked thousands of hours in overtime last year. One track worker filed for $250,000 in overtime, quadrupling his base pay, while one measurement operator's salary swelled to more than $460,000.

"This is about stealing. This is about fraud. This is about people saying they work and charging the taxpayers when they didn't work. It's stealing. It's criminal," said Cuomo at a news conference at his Midtown office, according to the Post. "So this has nothing to do with overtime. It has to do with theft and fraud, and that's criminal."

Cuomo asked why MTA management didn't clamp down on the excessive claims. "This is not a new issue for the MTA," he said. "They have been criticized for years on lack of an effective time and attendance system. Why didn't they change it? Why didn't they fix it? There's no excuse, in my opinion."

The governor said that an independent investigator should be appointed to do an audit. "Find out: A, to the extent they can, how widespread the fraud, or possible fraud, is; and B, explain to the MTA what management system has failed that has allowed this to go on and didn't catch it," said Cuomo.

John Samuelsen, president of the Transport Workers Union, refuted Cuomo's characterization of the issue. "Of course, I support an honest day's pay for an honest day's work. There is no systemic abuse or criminality [in overtime]," he told the Post, calling Cuomo's comments a "smokescreen about a problem that doesn't exist."

On April 23, the Empire Center's fiscal watchdog SeeThroughNY reported that the LIRR paid $224.6 million in overtime in 2018, up nearly $50 million from the previous year. The entire MTA paid out $1.3 billion in overtime, up from $1.2 billion in 2017.

Two days later, MTA Chairman Pat Foye called for a crackdown on overtime abuse.

Meanwhile, the MTA's latest fare hikes went into effect on Easter Sunday, boosting the price of a monthly LIRR pass by up to $15. A 30-day unlimited MetroCard rose from $121 to $127, and a seven-day pass from $32 to $33.

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U.S. President Trump speaks at NRA-ILA Leadership Forum in Indianapolis, Indiana. REUTERS

Trump may provoke lawmakers to impeach him: Senior Democrat

Republicans have accused Dems of grandstanding for votes.

Democrats are reluctant to impeach President Donald Trump, but he may provoke such a move by continuing to obstruct Congress' efforts to oversee his administration, a senior Democratic lawmaker said on Sunday.

Adam Schiff, chairman of the House of Representatives Intelligence Committee, told ABC's "This Week" that impeachment by the Democratic-run House would be politically divisive and unlikely to succeed in the Republican-run Senate.

"But he [Trump] may get us there," Schiff said. "He certainly seems to be trying and maybe this is his perverse way of dividing us more. ... He thinks that's to his political advantage, but it's certainly not to the country's advantage."

Trump's stonewalling of congressional probes of his administration does add weight to impeachment, Schiff told ABC. "But you know, part of our reluctance is we are already a bitterly divided country and an impeachment process will divide us further."

Democrats have confronted the Republican president and his administration for refusing to cooperate with at least six separate congressional investigations of Trump, his turbulent presidency, his family and his business interests.

A Democratic-led House committee on Wednesday approved a measure to hold Attorney General William Barr in contempt for refusing to hand over an unredacted copy of the Mueller report on Russian election interference even as Trump invoked the legal principle of executive privilege to block its disclosure.

Democrats are divided over how far to take their investigations, with some calling for impeachment proceedings and others backing continued investigations.

Republicans have accused Democrats of grandstanding for liberal voters. Some of Trump's allies believe any impeachment effort could prove unpopular and help him as he seeks re-election in 2020.

> **"He certainly seems to be trying and maybe this is his perverse way of dividing us more. ... He thinks that's to his political advantage, but it's certainly not to the country's advantage."**
>
> **Adam Schiff, chairman of the House of Representatives**

But even the Republican-controlled Senate Intelligence Committee has subpoenaed the president's son, Donald Trump Jr.

Schiff reiterated his suggestion Sunday that Congress could levy fines of $25,000 a day on administration officials who refuse to cooperate with demands for witness appearances and documents in congressional investigations.

"Look, I think if you fine someone $25,000 a day to their person until they comply, it gets their attention. ... I don't know how many are going to want to take that risk for Donald Trump," Schiff said. REUTERS

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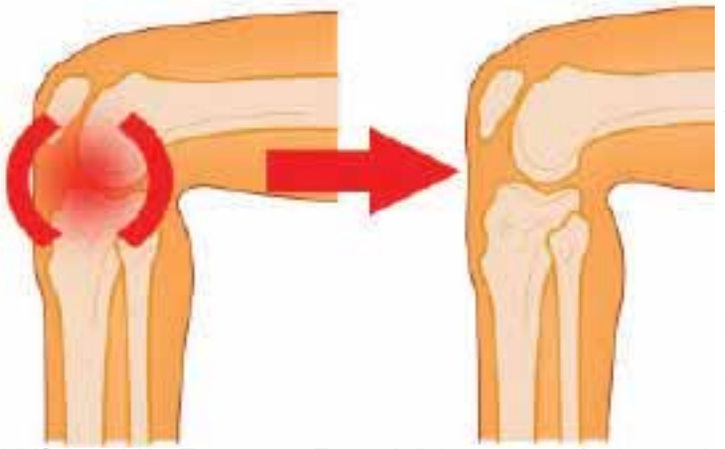

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Cuban LGBT activists defy government, hold unprecedented indie pride parade

At least three people were arrested by plainclothes cops.

Cuban LGBT activists participate in an annual demonstration against homophobia and transphobia in Havana.

ALL REUTERS IMAGES

Cuban gay rights activists held an unauthorized independent pride parade in Havana on Saturday despite the Communist government warning against it and calling it subversive, an unprecedented show of civil society in the one-party state.

More than a hundred Cubans chanting "Long live a diverse Cuba" and carrying rainbow flags joyfully marched a little over a half-mile from Havana's Central Park down to the seafront boulevard before being stopped by dozens of security officials.

At least three activists were arrested by plainclothes policemen while others were ordered to disperse given the activity did not have an official permit.

"This moment marks a before and an after for the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender [LGBT] community but also for Cuban civil society more generally," said independent journalist and LGBT activist Maykel Gonzalez Vivero.

"Social media is playing its role and civil society demonstrated it has strength, and can go out onto the streets if necessary, and from now on the government will have to take that into account."

This was the second march organized independently of state institutions — hitherto a rare occurrence in Cuba — in just over a month, although the previous one, in defense of animal rights, had received a permit from local authorities.

Activists called for their own parade after the state-run National Center for Sex Education (CENESEX) earlier this week abruptly canceled its 12th annual conga against homophobia — Cuba's equivalent of gay pride.

CENESEX, headed by Mariela Castro, the daughter of Communist Party leader Raul Castro, said in a statement that certain groups were planning to use the event to undermine the government, emboldened by the escalation of aggression by the Trump administration against Cuba and its leftist ally Venezuela.

The United States has for decades financed often covert programs to promote democracy on the island and undermine the Communist government.

But many LGBT activists said they felt the government was reacting more to pressure from evangelical churches, which have a growing following in Cuba and have campaigned against the expansion of gay rights.

CENESEX denounced the alternative parade as a "provocation" and several activists say they received threats either anonymously on social media or from state security in person not to attend it — not that it stopped them.

"This isn't a political march, this is a celebration to give the LGBT community visibility," said Myrna Rosa Padron Dickson.

CIVIL SOCIETY STRENGTHENING?

Activists promoted the march on social networks thanks to the ex

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pansion of the internet in Cuba in recent years that has more broadly seen increasing numbers of Cubans mobilize online over certain issues, sometimes apparently managing to influence policy.

The government, for example, postponed the full implementation of a decree clamping down on the arts after an online campaign protesting the law, and stepped back on regulations governing the private sector after entrepreneurs and experts complained.

So far, however, the government has retained tight control over physical public spaces, mostly restricting marches to expressions of support for the government, like the recent Labor Day parade.

The conga in Havana was an exception that became a regular occurrence, and a reminder that the government, which once sent gays to work camps in the early days of Fidel Castro's 1959 revolution, had made considerable advances in LGBT rights in recent years.

The country guarantees rights such as free sex-change operations and forbids discrimination on the basis of sexuality, in a region where some countries still have anti-sodomy laws.

"This isn't a political march, this is a celebration to give the LGBT community visibility."

Myrna Rosa Padron Dickson

Some LGBT activists say they felt the cancellation of the conga was a sign those rights are being eroded, possibly because a recent public consultation over a new constitution revealed that there was more opposition to the community than previously thought.

Many Cubans expressed their opposition to a change in the draft constitution that would have explicitly opened the door to gay marriage.

Evangelical churches also ran unprecedented campaigns against the change, which was eventually watered down.

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— **R.J. "Melting down,"** *Metro US reader*

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Taurus Ask questions and find out where you stand and who supports your ideas and plans. A heart-to-heart talk will motivate you to start your journey into the unknown.

Gemini Trying to change others is futile. If you want to make your life better, look inward and consider how to use your skills and resources to be the best you can be.

Cancer Stay focused on how to most effectively make a difference. Stay positive at all times. Your attitude and treatment of others will bring good results. Home improvements are favored.

Leo Don't let what others do or say get to you. Listen, assess your situation and do whatever is in your best interest. Physical improvements and romance are highlighted.

Virgo Just keep putting one foot in front of the other. The possibilities are endless, once you get started. Network with peers and express your thoughts and feelings to make things happen.

Libra Learn from your experience. If you face turmoil or a disgruntled or demanding individual, retreat and do something geared toward self-improvement and a healthier lifestyle.

Scorpio Reach out to people who share your beliefs and concerns. If you collaborate with someone, you'll come up with solutions to problems that have been slowing you down. A proposal should be looked at carefully.

Sagittarius Deal with partnerships head-on. If you are evasive or fail to ask direct questions, little will be accomplished. Physical activity will do you good. A romantic gesture will improve an important relationship.

Capricorn Keep your distance if someone tries to pry into your personal affairs. Concentrate on your assets and home environment, and keep things running smoothly. An unexpected change will turn out better than anticipated.

Aquarius Keep busy. Physical activity, helping others and personal improvements will be satisfying and will help you avoid getting stuck taking care of someone else's responsibilities.

Pisces Make plans and execute them strategically. Don't leave room for error or let anyone interfere. Walk away from excessive individuals or anyone who is emotionally manipulative. EUGENIA LAST

Demand Soars At NYC Medical Clinic For Promising Back Pain Treatment

Can This Medical Technology Possibly Eliminate Or Greatly Reduce Even The Most Severe Back Pain... Almost Instantly?

The Advanced Medical Treatment Every Back & Neck Pain Sufferer Needs To Know - No Matter How Bad The Pain Is Or How Many Other Treatments Have Failed

NYC Pain MD is a medical clinic with two locations in New York City that has made a name for itself by treating the worst cases of back or neck pain.

Here is what every back and neck pain sufferer who has failed to respond to other treatments and does not want surgery should know about one of the best treatment options available today for severe back and neck pain including when, why and where you should consider this treatment to get maximum results.

If you suffer with back, neck or nerve pain, you have probably already tried *many treatments...* especially countless pain medications.

Experienced doctors understand that even though pain medications such as anti-inflammatory pain pills are part of the recommended early treatment plan for back pain... they are rarely the answer.

In most cases they have minimal, short term results (if any) and have a laundry list of potential side effects. Some being serious and even life threatening.

Are there any better options?

Thankfully, advancements in science and technology come extremely fast. And now there is very good option to help relieve the pain.

An option that a lot of back and neck pain sufferers may have never heard of before.

Before we get into these treatments, please understand this...

NYC Pain MD is a REAL medical clinic that has treated the worst cases of back pain. Patients travel from all over to be treated at one of their clinics for all sorts of joint and muscle pain because they want the best medical treatments available.

What you are about to discover is a REAL medical treatment. Not some miracle cure you see on infomercials or on the internet.

Know this fact: There is no one treatment that will help every case of back pain. And we cannot guarantee this treatment will work for you. But this treatment has already helped countless back and neck pain sufferers who had given up hope. I bet many just like you.

What is this treatment? It's called...

Radiofrequency Neurotomy

"Radiofrequncy Neurotomy" is often referred to as RF for short.

RF is a procedure that is based on the theory that blocking the nerve supply to the painful area may alleviate pain and restore function.

There are many nerves around your spine and one of their jobs is to sense PAIN.

Radiofrequency waves are delivered to these nerves under advanced imaging to "block" the nerves.

Two procedures are performed. First, a test, diagnostic "Block" procedure is done to determine if the procedure is going to decrease pain and improve function.

If this first "test" procedure is successful, the Radio Frequency Neurotomy is scheduled and performed for longer term relief.

What Results Can You Expect?

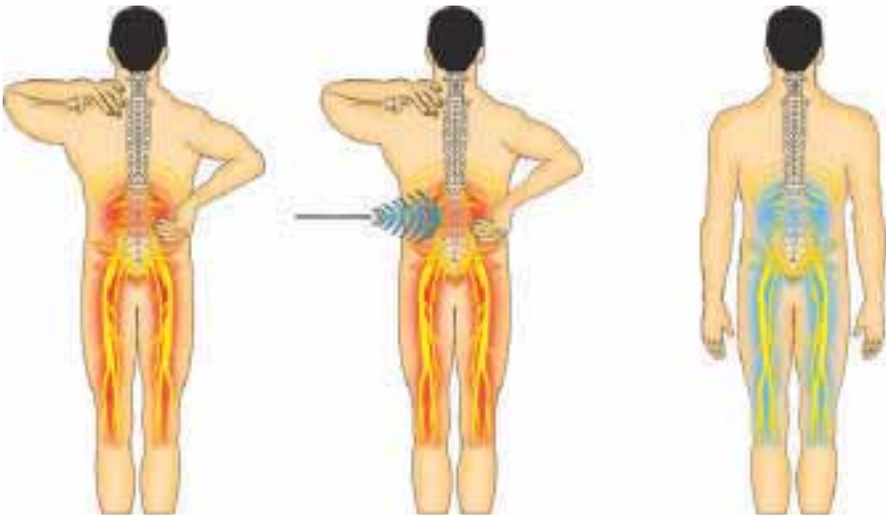
Like all real medical procedures... results vary for individual patients. No good and ethical doctor would guarantee any exact results for any procedure... that's just not how things work and it would be less than honest.

That's being said, it is not uncommon for patients to get complete, if not significant relief of their pain shortly after the treatment.

How Long Do The Results Last?

This procedure "blocks" the nerves pain signals... it does not destroy them. Therefore, the results are safe but not completely permanent. But, many patients get relief for 6 months… 12 months…. 18 months for some and some even longer. The great news is - another procedure can be safely preformed for more relief if necessary.

Advanced Treatment Uses Radio Frequencies To Relieve Serious Neck & Back Pain



Science rescues back & neck pain sufferers?: Radio Frequency Waves are used to block the nerve supply to the painful area and may alleviate pain and restore function to many.

While we cannot claim this is a complete "permanent cure" but... it can be a god-send for so many who were in constant pain.

Really... what would it be worth it to you could get out of pain for long enough so you could start enjoying your everyday life again?

Would it be worth it to be able to finally get a good nights sleep again?

How about being able to go for a simple walk or just do your basic daily chores without worrying about so much pain?

Is It Safe?

Yes. This procedure has been done countless times and continues to have an excellent safety record. It is minimally invasive and is not surgical.

Who Should Try This Treatment?

RF should be considered after other treatments, such as anti-inflammatory pain medication and physical therapy do not offer good enough results.

RF has also been found effective AFTER back surgery when patient's still feel pain.

The pain after a failed back surgery can be debilitating for some and this procedure may be the only thing that helps give you relief.

What To Do Next If You Are In Pain And The "X" Factor

Here is the "X" factor many do not consider that might be the difference between you getting the best possible treatment or not.

Many experts suggest choosing a medical clinic that offers all these treatments and has the proper, most advanced technology all under one roof without the need for a surgical center or hospital.

Major Savings In Time And Costs Of Care?

NYC Pain MD's method allows you to avoid expensive hospital or out patient surgi-center facility fees which often run 3 to 4 times the cost of the procedure itself. And you don't have to go through the huge stress and time consuming process of going all over the city to outside centers. All the *NYC Pain MD* treatments can be done in out in-office procedure suites saving you stress, time and dollars. *NYC Pain MD* believes this additional "X" factor is one of the reasons so many back pain sufferers travel from all over to be treated at one of their advanced medical clinics.

Your Invitation

NYC Pain MD offers a limited number of complimentary back pain treatment screenings every month. These screenings are a way for back pain sufferers to get some of their questions answered and see if they are a candidate for one of the cutting-edge treatments offered at *NYC Pain MD*. If you would like a complimentary screening, just call 877-907-2934 and tell the scheduling expert who answers the phone, "I would like a complimentary back pain screening."

The screenings fill up fast every month. If you do not call in time to get one this month, the expert will schedule you for next month.

This screening is no cost and no obligation.

Many of the treatments offered are covered by many insurance plans and traditional medicare.

Call 877-907-2934 for your free screening and find out if you can get out of pain today.

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Nick Waterhouse talks looking back to go forward

We spoke with the rock revivalist about his brand-new self-titled album. **PAT KING**

On the album "Pet Sounds," the saddest boy on the beach, Brian Wilson, delivered what was probably the biggest musical shrug ever recorded up until that point by proclaiming that he "just wasn't made for these times." While Wilson longed for a slower pace that he could keep up with, you get the sense that singer-songwriter and multi-instrumentalist Nick Waterhouse is longing for a time when music was more direct. For close to a decade, Waterhouse has been carefully crafting rock and roll records that feel untouched by modern trends to a time when imperfections added edge and charisma and were not smoothed out in the recording process.

His new self-titled album is a perfect culmination of everything he has tried to achieve as a songwriter up to this point. The 11 songs on the album crackle with urgency as his band, complete with horns, piano and back-up singers, conjure the spirit of early rock that ruled the airwaves before The Beatles and the Stones. Everything falls into place in a way that makes this record feel like a singles collection or greatest hits record from another time. For that reason, Waterhouse felt it would be wrong to label the record anything other than his given name.

"I realize that this is me planting my flag," explains Waterhouse. "It was the culmination of all things. Not just how I think or how I play guitar

ZACH LEWIS

or who I play with or how I arrange my songs… It just made sense to call it my own name. If someone were new to me, I would want them to start here."

Growing up and playing in the burgeoning SoCal garage-rock scene, Waterhouse knew that there was a point where he could either move forward into indulging the more psychedelic tendencies that many of his peers would eventually move toward, or he could look back to the rock and roll of that past. So while artists like Ty Segall and Thee Oh Sees have blurred the edges of their early three-chord simplified rock into new acid trip-inducing territories, Waterhouse was busy mining the building blocks of '50s and '60s rock.

"I think all I've ever done is follow the fact that I really liked my mom's Van Morrison records when I was little," laughs Waterhouse. "Van Morrison was the guy who was, like, growing up. The Bob Dylan, post-The Band thing, where he was trying to relate what he likes in Bobby Bland records, and incorporating that influence into his own vision. I think that's just what I've been trying to do my whole career."

While Waterhouse may always be in pursuit of capturing that old-school spirit of rock as a producer, the thought of making a complete left turn hasn't eluded him either.

"Every time I'm producing something I feel like I have to know the spirit of whatever it is we're working on," he says. "The one thing I was really excited about, and I talked for a moment with, was with [underground hip-hop producer] Mad Lib to make a hip-hop record, but with orchestration. We would write the music together, I would go and then produce the track to reorganize or chop up, and then bring it back into the studio, and then do all the overdubbing on top of his mixing of a song I did live. I thought that would be really interesting, and I think that would be a left turn for my fan base [laughs]."

Make sure to catch Nick Waterhouse when he plays Music Hall of Williamsburg on Monday, May 14.

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'With "The Avengers," we did something extraordinary' Scarlett Johansson

The American actress chatted with Metro about the path of "The Avengers" and her experiences during filming. GABRIELA ACOSTA SILVA, MWN

Scarlett Johansson, who plays Natasha Romanoff/ Black Widow in "Avengers: Endgame," talked with Metro.

Would you like the "Avengers" story to continue?
I will avoid spoilers out of respect for people, but surely there will be some surprises.

Eleven years have passed since the first film. How much did it mark you personally and professionally?
We recently recalled that it was on May 2, 2008, when "Iron Man" was released. It has started the Marvel film universe, which in total has added six films. It has been a challenge to play Black Widow, a character full of contrasts and strength. But above all, to show a sensitive female role in a world dominated by men. On a professional level, it gave me a lot of learning, discipline and physical condition [laughs].

It is a much more human story that could cause tears.
We all got involved in every way and were absorbed by the story. It has been a trip for us and the fans. I laughed, I cried and I experienced all the emotions as an actress and a spectator. In addition, in this new release, women gain relevance not to compete, but to reach a gender equity in history.

Are you a woman who likes to maintain balance?
Black Widow was always a stabilizing force. I think Natasha Romanoff is a little different from the average superhero, because she has a different moral compass. She understands that there is a balance between light and darkness in the world and that one must make a sacrifice at both ends to maintain a certain balance. She can be very cold, but she has a big heart. There has always been a mystery surrounding Black Widow because you can never know exactly which side she is on.

$356
million is the budget of the 2019 "Avengers" film.

Do you already miss that side of Natasha?
Playing a character so many times during the last 10 years was very rewarding. Being able to return again and again to it and be part of Marvel's cinematographic universe during the last few years was an incredible opportunity. Therefore, in many aspects it is a reflection of myself and reflects my own growth and my own challenges. I think it was an incredible gift as an actress to have lived that experience. And I feel we did something extraordinary with this movie.

Will you miss the Avengers?
We have lived so many changes in the last 10 years in our careers and in our personal lives. The "Avengers" movies were always like coming home, reuniting with your family and picking up where we had left off. We all have such a close relationship because we have spent so much time together.

"We have all grown and lived this wonderful experience together. We have started a family, we have married or divorced."
Scarlett Johansson, actress

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Humans could live on Mars in these shelters

New York-based design studio AI SpaceFactory won the NASA competition. ALL IMAGES AI SPACEFACTORY

Intense competition

The winner of NASA's 3-D-Printed Habitat Challenge was decided after a face-off of two teams at Caterpillar's Edwards Demonstration & Learning Center in Edwards, Illinois. The teams competed in creating subscale shelters out of recyclables and materials that could be found on deep-space destinations, like the moon and Mars. MWN

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EDUCATION

Michael Torpey talks another season of 'Paid Off' and the politics around student debt

The second season of "Paid Off With Michael Torpey" premieres tonight on TruTV.

PAT KING
patrick.king@metro.us

TruTV's "Paid Off," photographed on Monday, Dec. 10, 2018, in Atlanta, Georgia. ALL PHOTOS JOHN NOWAK/TRUTV

When we caught up with Michael Torpey before the premiere of the first season of his show "Paid Off With Michael Torpey" on TruTV last year, the show seemed like it was an idea just crazy enough to work. Since then, the groundbreaking game show has helped numerous contestants decrease or completely eradicate their student debt, and struck a chord with an American audience desperate for a solution to the current crisis we are living through. After getting such a positive response, the show will be returning tonight to help even more people each night: In addition to helping contestants in the studio, Torpey will also be taking live calls from those in need around the country. We caught up with Michael Torpey ahead of the premiere about the new season and what he thinks politicians should be discussing ahead of the 2020 election.

"Paid Off" is back for its second season. What do you attribute to the show's success?

I think it is tapping into a cause that a lot of people believe in and are waking up to. The hope was that it would be presented in a way that didn't feel political — no, sorry, not political, not partisan. You know, traditionally it feels like it's been a cause of the left. But I really wanted to present human stories and say, look at these people who are doing their absolute best and they're just getting screwed over by our higher education system. And I think people were really able to get behind that and realize that there's something wrong, that we are penalizing people for just wanting an education. When we're holding people back from doing work that we look around our community and see that we need to have done, then there's something really wrong here. So it was great to have support from viewers, and also to have people reach out and say, you know, that they want to come on. It's crazy that this is someone's best course of action but unfortunately that's where we are right now.

It seems like both student debt relief and free public college are issues that the majority of people can get behind — like the legalization of marijuana — but the government is slow to implement on a wide scale. What do you think is the best course of action for people to make change at the political level?

Sure. Well, you brought up of the legalization of marijuana. I think that's a good parallel between the two, because of the student debt crisis and mass incarceration for drug charges. They're both results of poor government policy. When people say, hey, you've done this wrong for years, we just need you to fix it — I think that's completely appropriate. People want to paint it as this government giveaway that comes out of nowhere. That's wrong. The government has been involved in student debt for years. It's become a huge problem, and for them to fix it, it's not out of left field, it's completely appropriate. I think the same goes for our failed drug policies. If we're going to legalize marijuana, we have to step in, and we have to do right by all the people whom we have penalized with insane jail terms for possession and minor marijuana offenses.

I want people to call the representatives. It's what I say at the end of every show. I want them to do it. We should be flooding their phone lines — that works. Ask anyone who works at an office. Ask anyone who works in one of the offices of one of our elected officials. It's the people who call their office, those are the messages that get relayed. You know, writing letters is great, too, but put that number in your phone. Make it a part of your walk to work. Just call them up and say, "Hey, it's Michael. I need you to get behind [Sen. Elizabeth] Warren's plan for debt forgiveness. That, I think, is the best thing we can do, because our elected officials need to know how we feel about this. Even if it's someone who you know doesn't care, who vehemently does not agree, call their office every day and tell them you're going to find someone who does.

What do you think is the best strategy for debt forgiveness?

Bernie hasn't put out a new plan in a while. I feel like we're going to hear something new from him soon, so I don't necessarily want to say that I'm choosing someone over another. But I will say that I like that Sen. Warren's plan addresses the outstanding debt and the cause of it. Because if you just come in and forgive all this debt but you just ignore the current higher education system, what about next year? What about all of their debt? You've got to address the root of it, too, and she wants to have more funding for public education so that it can be free as well. And I think that needs to happen.

In terms of cost, these are things that we decide to pay for as a society, and I would happily pay more for a more educated, better-functioning society, and a happier society. It would be something that I would happily sacrifice more of my income toward. And money is always an excuse for something that people don't want to do. I feel like we can always find funding when needed.

Hearing people tell their stories of their struggles with student debt must take a toll on you. How are you feeling going into the second season?

It's devastating to hear the sacrifices people are making for going to school, but it's inspiring to hear that they're still looking to make a change and they have these frames [of mind] and they have work that they want to do. The few people whom we've really been able to help out, it pushes the group for it as a whole. So when you see the small effect of this little game show, and how many lives we have changed already, and you think, man, if we can cancel out debt [with] Warren's plan... I think 75 percent of debtholders would be debt-free immediately? So 30 million people [would be] immediately unburdened?

We only have a couple of grand-prize winners each season — it's really only eight a year who are completely unburdened of their debt. And to see that is so powerful, for someone to be able to say they can go do what they worked toward their whole life. If that were to happen on a mass scale, in one fell swoop, for 30 million people? It would be one of the most invigorating moments in this country's history.

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New federal student loans are getting cheaper

Federal student loan rates are going down.

TEDDY NYKIEL
letters@metro.us

Interest rates for student loans in the federal direct loan program are decreasing by 0.52 percentage points for the 2019-20 school year compared with loans borrowed for 2018-19. The difference can be hundreds of dollars over the life of a loan.

The coming reduction is the first time in three years that federal loan rates have dropped.

Federal student loan interest rates for the 2019-20 school year, effective July 1:

-4.53 percent for subsidized and unsubsidized undergraduate loans (down from 5.05 percent).

-6.08 percent for unsubsidized graduate school loans (down from 6.60 percent).

-7.08 percent for parent and graduate PLUS loans (down from 7.60 percent).

-The government pays the interest on subsidized loans while the student is in school.

Why federal student loan rates are dropping

Congress sets new federal student loan interest rates annually for loans issued in the following academic year. Rates are based on the yield of the 10-year Treasury note, which is lower than when the government set last year's rates.

Federal student loan interest rates are fixed throughout the life of the loan. The rates for loans issued in previous years don't change.

For instance, a federal student loan borrowed in Fall 2018 by an undergraduate had a 5.05 percent rate. If the student borrows again in Fall 2019, the new loan will have a 4.53 percent rate. The rate on each loan will stay the same until the loan is paid off.

How to save more on student loans

Just because federal loan rates are dropping doesn't mean students should borrow more.

Interest accrues daily while students are in school. And unless they have subsidized loans, students are responsible for paying it.

How students can limit their debt and save on student loan interest

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Limit borrowing. If your financial aid package includes more loans than you'll need, accept a portion and reject the rest. Aim for payments no larger than 10 percent of your expected take-home pay if you have a solid idea of your future salary. Use a student loan affordability calculator to estimate how much that allows you to borrow.

Make payments during school. Interest that accrues during school gets capitalized, or added to the principal balance, when the loan enters repayment. Then, more interest accrues on the larger balance. Students can prevent this by making interest-only payments during school. If that's too much to handle on a college budget, even paying $25 a month will help keep interest at bay.

Consider refinancing after graduation. Since federal loan rates are fixed, the only way to lower them is to refinance through a private lender. This is not the right move for everyone — refinanced federal loans lose eligibility for Public Service Loan Forgiveness and income-driven repayment. But if you have a credit score at least in the high-600s, a steady income large enough to afford your lifestyle and debt payments, and plan to work in the private sector, student loan refinancing may save you money.

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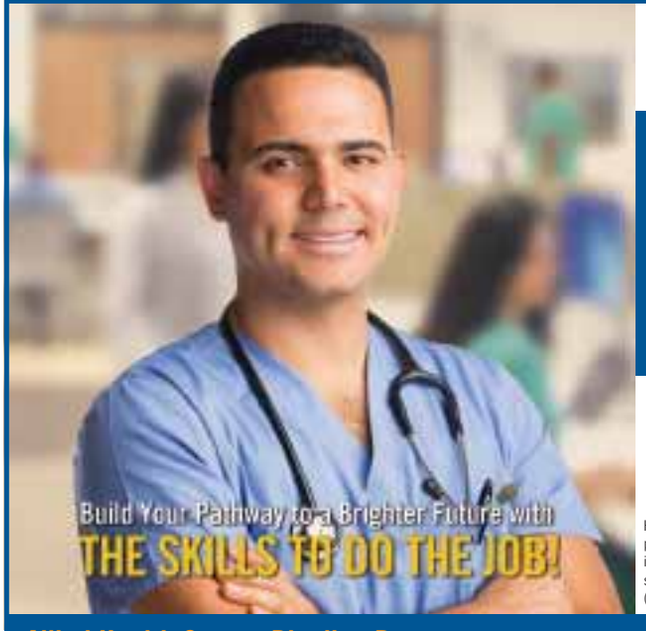

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The Giants are expected to trade ace lefty Madison Bumgarner this summer. GETTY IMAGES

MadBum puts Yanks on no-trade list

The Giants ace will likely be on the move this summer.

JOE PANTORNO
joseph.pantorno@metro.us

The days of San Francisco Giants domination are long gone as the 2010, 2012 and 2014 World Series champions are on the verge of breaking up amidst recent struggles.

It's only a matter of time until one of the centerpieces of those teams, ace starting pitcher Madison Bumgarner, is on his way out of the Bay Area.

The 29-year-old southpaw will be a free agent following the 2020 season, where he'll be on the verge of a major payday.

Bumgarner was one of Major League Baseball's workhorses before injuries provided a series of setbacks over the past two years.

He recorded at least 200 innings of work in each year from 2011 to 2016, garnering four All-Star Game selections and four top 10 finishes in the National League Cy Young Award voting. During those six seasons, he went 93-61 with a 3.00 ERA and 1,285 strikeouts.

It was his postseason accolades that made him one of the game's biggest names, however.

In 16 playoff appearances, Bumgarner is 8-3 with a minuscule 2.11 ERA. Those numbers were even better on the biggest stage as he allowed just a single run in a combined 36 innings pitched during the 2010, 2012 and 2014 World Series.

The expected massive contract that is coming Bumgarner's way is not going to be conducive for the Giants' rebuilding efforts.

San Francisco won just 64 games in 2017 before 73 triumphs last season. Things aren't looking much better through the first six weeks of 2019 as they were 16-23 through their first 39 games.

As their season is expected to be over by the latter stages of the summer, Bumgarner's name could be a marquee one around the league's trade deadline at the end of July.

In anticipation of such a possibility, Bumgarner submitted an eight-team no-trade list to the Giants.

And it isn't good news for the New York Yankees as they are on that list.

Also on the list are the Atlanta Braves, Boston Red Sox, Chicago Cubs, Houston Astros, Milwaukee Brewers, Philadelphia Phillies and St. Louis Cardinals, per Ken Rosenthal of the Athletic.

The Yankees' starting pitching staff is in need of some help, especially toward the front end.

Ace Luis Severino is out until the All-Star break and a rough second half of last season created plenty of question marks around his reliability.

James Paxton is on the DL, Masahiro Tanaka's elbow is considered a ticking time bomb, and JA Happ's return has been underwhelming.

They'll also lose CC Sabathia at season's end to retirement.

Bumgarner would have provided a proven winner with a litany of postseason experience to the Yankees' rotation as they keep their sights set on a World Series title.

Even if injuries have gutted the roster.

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Manchester City wins second straight Premier League crown

For the second consecutive season, Manchester City are the champions of the English Premier League after securing the title with a 4-1 triumph over Brighton & Hove Albion on Sunday afternoon.

The three points lifted City to 98 on the season, just one ahead of second-place Liverpool, who defeated Wolverhampton, 2-0, to close out the season. The Reds needed Manchester City to either draw or lose to have a chance to win their first Premier League title since 1990.

It is the first time in Premier League history that the top two clubs finished a season with 90 or more points.

City's final hurdle on Sunday didn't start on the best note. Brighton, who finished the season in 17th out of 20 teams, scored first through Glenn Murray's header in the 27th minute to give Liverpool a chance to snatch the Premier League Trophy.

But that was as close as the Reds would get as Manchester City turned it on against Brighton as goals from Sergio Aguero, Aymeric Laporte, Riyad Mahrez and Ilkay Gundogan ended the season in style.

Manchester City ended the campaign on a 14-match winning streak to come away as champions with a 32-2-4 record.

Liverpool lost just once in 38 Premier League matches this season, winning their last matches. But a six-match stretch that featured four draws from Jan. 30 to March 3 doomed the Reds.

It's a difficult way to end the week for a Liverpool squad that overcame a 3-0 first-leg deficit against Barcelona in the semifinals of the UEFA Champions League on Tuesday.

The Reds will play in the Champions League Final against fellow English side Tottenham in Madrid on June 1. Tottenham finished fourth in the league following a draw to Everton.

Chelsea's draw to Leicester City secured third place for the London side to round out a top four that automatically qualifies for next year's Champions League.

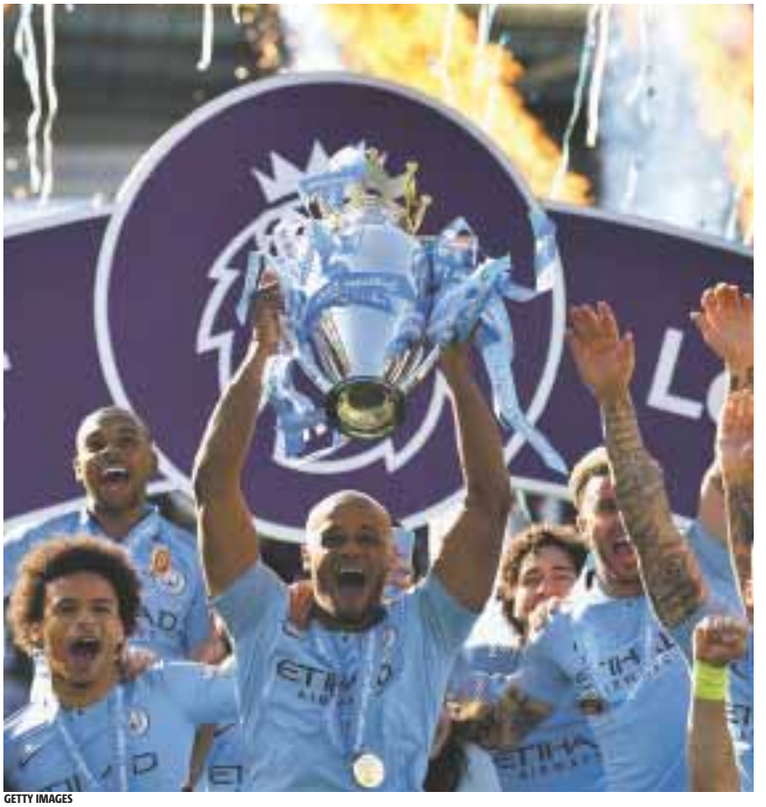
Fifth-place Arsenal and sixth-place Manchester United have automatically qualified for the UEFA Europa League. However, Arsenal can get an automatic bid to the Champions League should they defeat Chelsea in the Europa League Final on May 29 in Azerbaijan.

For Manchester City, though, their reign as one of the top clubs in England continues as they now have four league titles since 2012.

This was a club that was often regarded as the English city's little brother to Manchester United, having not won a Premier League title since 1967-68.

But the purchase of the club by Sheikh Mansour in 2008 revitalized Manchester City, making them one of the richest soccer teams in the world. With an abundance of funds to purchase the top players in the world, the Citizens have won four Premier League titles, one FA Cup, four League Cups and two Community Shields.

They will try to complete a domestic double on May 18 when they face Watford in the FA Cup Final. JOE PANTORNO



GETTY IMAGES

HARDEN'S LEGACY FURTHER TARNISHED

OPINION

JOE PANTORNO
@JoePantorno

James Harden was unable to guide his Rockets past the Warriors in the playoffs for the fourth time in five seasons. GETTY IMAGES

The Golden State Warriors continue to throw a wrench in our ability to properly label the legacies of some of this generation's greatest NBA stars.

That's usually what happens when an era is defined by a superteam, or a dynasty, or whatever you want to call them.

A team that has featured Stephen Curry, Klay Thompson and Draymond Green as its centerpiece for five years now was going to be good enough to be a force in the Western Conference for years.

The addition of Kevin Durant simply made them a juggernaut. Three championships in the past four years, a fifth coming.

Their presence at the upper echelon of the NBA has forced us to play an enormous game of "what if," however. Just like we've had to do during dynasties attained by the Boston Celtics in the '60s or the Chicago Bulls in the '90s.

Parity in basketball is pretty rare, isn't it?

Golden State's dominance has already cast a shadow over Durant's career. There will always be a faction of detractors that claim he had to join a loaded team to win a championship after unsuccessful attempts with the Oklahoma City Thunder.

But now their dominance is starting to raise questions about Houston Rockets superstar James Harden, who once again failed to find a way through the Warriors in the playoffs.

Harden and the Rockets went down in six games to Golden State, a frustrating follow-up to a seven-game thriller in the Western Conference Finals in which the Warriors were clearly on the ropes (though they were apparently bailed out by the absence of Chris Paul for Game 7).

This year, a healthy Houston side was supposed to provide Golden State with its toughest challenge prior to the Finals. Those chances jumped exponentially when Durant exited Game 5 with a calf injury that held him out for the remainder of the second round.

Down one with eight minutes remaining in that game, Harden — who led the NBA with 36.1 points per game this season — took just one shot.

With no Durant for Game 6 in Houston, it was expected that the Rockets would at least push the series to the brink with a win at home.

But Harden's 35 points on 11-of-25 shooting, along with five missed free throws, weren't enough in a five-point loss as Curry and Thompson lifted the dynastic Warriors to the Western Conference Finals.

It was the fourth playoff loss to the Warriors in the past five years for Harden as the first 10 seasons of his Hall-of-Fame career has been accentuated by playoff failures to Curry and Co.

Just another player who can't win a title by himself?

That could be an unfair assessment given the sheer power of the Warriors. But those questions are emerging after this postseason and the golden chance that Harden let slip through his fingers.

It would be a shock if Harden went his entire NBA career without winning a title, and his odds are only going to increase starting next year.

The Warriors are on the verge of breaking up as Durant and Thompson could be heading to new teams in free agency this summer. Those moves could blow the Western Conference wide open — and thus get Harden a ring while in a Rockets uniform.

It will provide the seven-time All-Star with a mountaintop moment for his career, but there will always be the notion that he had to wait for the superteam to break up in order to do so.

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LEGAL NOTICES

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Mercedes M. Alava;
Jose A. Pouso, ET AL.,
Defendant(s). Pursuant to a Judgment of Foreclosure and Sale duly filed on February 6, 2018, I, the undersigned Referee will sell at public auction at the Queens County Courthouse, Courtroom 25, 88-11 Sutphin Boulevard, Jamaica, NY on May 31, 2019 at 10:00 a.m., premises known as 153-10 Bayside Avenue, Flushing, NY. All that certain plot, piece or parcel of land, with the buildings and improvements thereon erected, situate, lying and being in the Borough of Queens, County of Queens, City and State of New York, Block 4838 and Lot 34. Approximate amount of judgment is $645,845.16 plus interest and costs. Premises will be sold subject to provisions of filed Judgment Index # 700611/2015.
Alan Kestenbaum, Esq., Referee
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RETURN DATE: June 11, 2019
KWABENA OSAFO, Plaintiff V.
JOSEPHINE AMPONSAH, Defendant

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Attest: /s/ Bill Kemp, Constable, City of Stamford.
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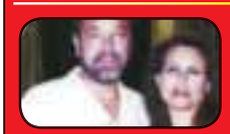

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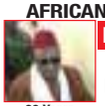

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GAMES

metro.us/crossword

ACROSS
1 Injection
5 Too heavy
10 Walk with heavy steps
14 Prying
15 Fit for a king
16 Of sound mind
17 Basics
18 Failure to do one's duty
20 Luau dish
21 Wagers
22 Not as polite
23 Dishonest folks
25 Family member
26 Meager; measly
28 Pious
31 Taken __; surprised
32 "__ Blue Gown"
34 Parking area
36 Walkway
37 Smooth & shiny
38 __-crossed; ill-fated
39 Feasted
40 Fast
41 Stable animal
42 Schoolchild's compositions
44 Twirl around an axis
45 Fleur-de-__
46 Subdues
47 Starbucks edible
50 Switzerland's capital
51 Put __; delay
54 Horseback rider
57 Largest tribe in South Africa
58 Garbage truck's destination
59 Sicker than before
60 Dollar bills
61 Talk back
62 Stranger
63 Some of Keats' poems

DOWN
1 In a __; instantly
2 Vagabond
3 Moves like a fan
4 Cobb & Burrell
5 Crabby
6 Borscht ingredients
7 Breakfast order
8 Actor Mineo
9 Inventor Whitney
10 Artificial; mock
11 "...o'er the __ of the free..."
12 A single time
13 Forest animal
19 Serious
21 Tree coating
24 Mosquito bite reaction
25 52 cards
26 Dad
27 Diminish; lessen
28 Perished
29 Diagnostic test
30 Browned bread
32 European range
33 Flowery neckwear
35 Birch or beech
37 "__ who?"; skeptic's question
38 As __ as a boil
40 Thin metal bars
41 Choir selection
43 Slumbers
44 Actor James
46 Josh with
47 Hospital furnishings
48 Greenish-blue
49 Periodontist's focus
50 Robin or jay
52 Escape
53 Complain childishly
55 Siesta hour
56 Curtain holder
57 Animal park

Check your answers and play more games **at metro.us/games**

metro.us/sudoku

1	3				5		6	4
5		8	3		6	2		
		6	1					8
7		9						2
	6	4				9	1	
8						6		5
3					8	1		
		7	5		9	4		3
4	2		6				8	9

PLAY ANYT
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game

Yesterday's Answers

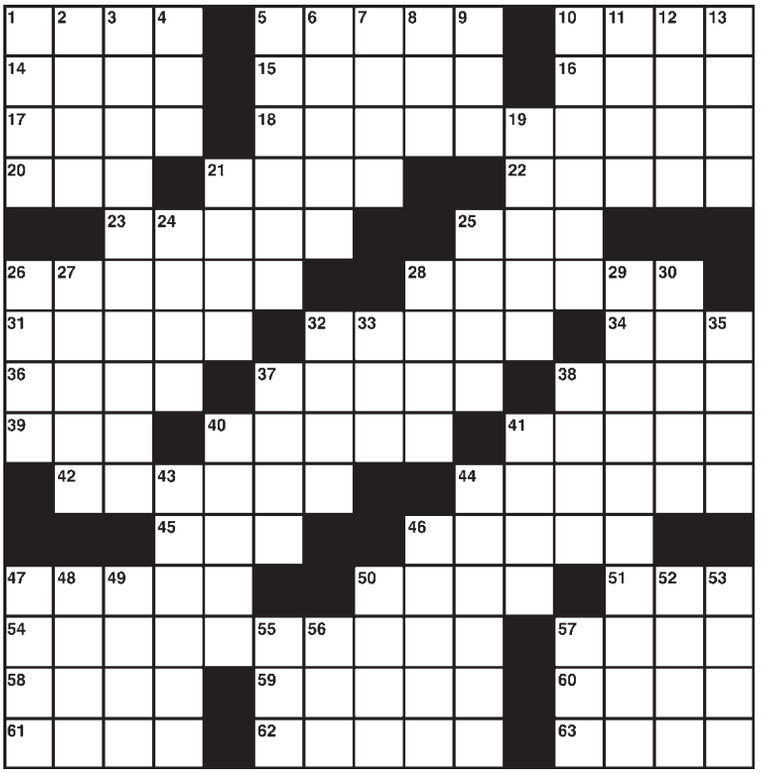
	A	S	H		S	C	A	M	P		L	O	T	S
D	U	P	E		T	H	R	E	E		O	A	H	U
O	N	E	S		R	E	C	A	P	T	U	R	E	D
S	T	E		F	E	A	S	T		R	I	S	E	S
		C	R	I	S	P			S	I	S			
A	B	H	O	R	S			R	E	C	A	P	S	
B	O	L	T	S		P	R	A	N	K		R	E	D
L	I	E	S		F	L	U	I	D		V	I	V	A
E	S	S		R	O	U	N	D		L	O	V	E	R
	E	S	S	A	Y	S			B	E	W	A	R	E
			H	I	T			W	A	I	S	T		
E	B	S	E	N		S	L	A	T	S		E	L	F
B	E	L	L	Y	L	A	U	G	H		B	E	A	R
B	A	I	L		A	G	R	E	E		T	Y	P	O
S	U	M	S		B	E	E	R	S		W	E	S	

wander words

Category: Fictional Character

S	N	E	S
S	A	P	E
U	R	E	V

Trace a path, using every letter once, to find the hidden phrase. Your path can turn in any direction, but not diagonally.



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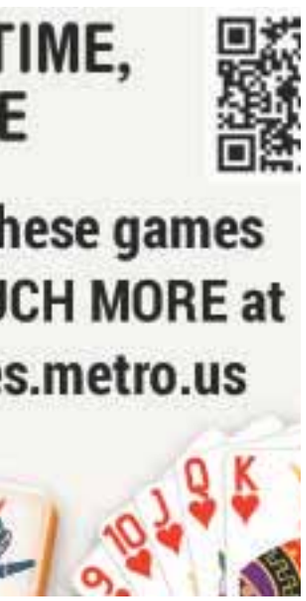

metro.us/wordsearch

S	T	E	V	I	E	S	I	R	D	
B	I	R	T	H	D	A	Y	D	E	
D	N	U	O	R	G	L	H	E	R	
O	D	E	L	A	E	S	T	N	E	
R	I	Z	M	V	B	W	I	G	V	
E	Z	W	O	O	O	E	A	I	I	
H	K	L	I	N	T	D	F	S	L	
G	Y	U	D	S	O	O	S	Q	E	
I	O	E	D	D	H	A	W	K	D	
H	R	Y	P	P	A	H	J	N	X	

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Duke
Faith
Ground
Happy
Higher
I Wish
Lovely
Motown
Sealed
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Sir
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Wonder

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